

1 STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

2 9TH CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION - NASHUA

3
4 IN THE MATTER OF)
5 THOMAS SOBELL,) Family Division Case No.
6 Petitioner,) 659-2013-DM-00348
7 and) Nashua, New Hampshire
8) May 1, 2014
9 PATRICIA SOBELL,) 1:20 p.m.
10 Respondent.)
11

12 HEARING ON PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE
13 BEFORE THE HONORABLE JULIE INTROCASO
14 JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT - FAMILY DIVISION

15 APPEARANCES:

16 For the Petitioner: Sandra F. Bloomenthal, Esq.
17 BLOOMENTHAL LAW OFFICE
18 P.O. Box 6761
19 Laconia, NH 03247

20 For the Respondent: Allen Lucas, Esq.
21 LUCAS LAW, PLLC
22 PO Box 445
23 Wolfeboro, NH 03894

24 ALSO PRESENT:

25 Kathleen Sternenberg,
Guardian ad Litem

Audio Operator: Electronically Recorded
Not Monitored

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1 (Proceedings commence at 1:20 p.m.)

2 THE COURT: Okay. We are here on 659-2013-DM-348,
3 the matter of Thomas Sobell and Patricia Sobell.

4 Both parties are here. The Petitioner is
5 represented by Attorney Bloomenthal; Respondent's represented
6 by Attorney Lucas. We are also joined by the guardian ad
7 litem, Kathleen Sternenberg.

8 Before we start the pre-trial conference, Attorney
9 Sternenberg gives reason for me to talk with counsel. I heard
10 some preliminary motions in this case, I know, sometime ago.
11 And at that time, I recall that Mr. Sobell had asked for the
12 appointment of a guardian ad litem by the Court. And I
13 indicated, I believe, at that time that there was no fund.
14 And the only way that we would have a guardian is if one of
15 the parties were to take financial responsibility for that.

16 And I invited the parties to seek out the assistance
17 of a guardian if Mr. Sobell felt the need for a guardian and
18 had the ability to pay. Sometime thereafter, I received an
19 order on appointment of guardian ad litem form that was
20 prepared by someone, I assume Petitioner's counsel. And I
21 approved that on January 30th.

22 And I recognize Attorney Sternenberg's writing, I
23 believe -- maybe, maybe not -- but her name. Counsel should
24 know that Attorney Sternenberg and I are very good friends.
25 Very good friends. I don't know if she shared that with you,

1 or she did not. And I'm going to look at K. -- who I refer to
2 as K. I don't call her Kathleen or -- K., are we very good
3 friends?

4 MS. STERNENBERG: Yeah, I think so.

5 THE COURT: Yeah, we are very good friends. Very
6 good friends like godparent of my child. We are very close.

7 That being said, I have no problem at all in telling
8 Attorney Sternenberg she's completely wrong about something,
9 which is probably why she's one of my good friends. We're
10 both pretty strong women and argue with one another about a
11 lot of things. We met in the context of being marital
12 attorneys in a number of cases. So we have a very healthy, I
13 think, professional respect for one another, but we also have
14 a pretty strong personal relationship.

15 She is on my conflict list. I would never hear a
16 case of hers where she was acting as counsel for a party, but
17 I know she's a guardian ad litem. I also think, by the way,
18 she's probably one of the best guardian ad litems out there.
19 I don't appoint her to cases because I don't want anyone to
20 think that I'm choosing a friend.

21 But you independently found her. And under those
22 circumstances, I was certainly willing to accept what I
23 thought was a fine choice for a guardian. So I have a lot of
24 respect for her, but I also would not necessarily and feel
25 absolutely feel no obligation -- sorry, K. -- to follow any